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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 26 August 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you that Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing its military campaign against the Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip, in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the prohibition of reprisals and collective punishment against the civilian population under occupation. The intensification of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and to fully ignite yet another round of deadly violence. This demands the attention of the international community, particularly the Security Council, which is duty-bound to act to maintain international peace and security. The Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to which the Fourth Geneva Convention is fully applicable, must not continue to be an exception for the upholding of that duty.

Over the past few days, the civilian casualty toll has continued to mount as a result of the Israeli onslaught, with at least 11 Palestinian civilians killed and more than 30 people injured, including women and children, and several people critically wounded and struggling to survive. All of the killings and injuries have been caused by military air strikes carried out by the occupying Power against civilian areas in Gaza. These air strikes have included targeted attacks by which Israel has barbarically perpetrated yet more extrajudicial executions of Palestinians.

In this regard, on 24 August 2011, Israel carried out a deliberate air strike on a car travelling in the Rafah area, killing Ismail Al-Asmar, aged 34, and another air strike later in the day against the Al-Sheikh Radwan area of Gaza City, killing Attiyyeh Mahmoud Miqat, aged 21. Another man, Ismail Ammoum, aged 65, was killed in an Israeli attack near Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, his charred and dismembered body once again confirming the viciousness of the weaponry being used by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population.

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Yesterday, 25 August 2011, the Israeli occupying forces launched a series of air strikes, killing at least eight Palestinians and wounding dozens of others. Shockingly, an air assault was carried out against a gymnasium, Al-Salam (Peace) Sports Club, in a densely populated civilian area in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza Strip, killing one child, Salama Al-Masri, aged 17, and Alaa' Adnan Al-Jakhbair, aged 22, and injuring 20 other civilians, including 7 children and 4 women. Also on 25 August, Israel launched attacks targeting Al-Sudaniyya neighbourhood of Gaza City, killing Saleem Khaled Al-Arabeed, aged 25, and Alaa' Abu Al-Khair, aged 24, and an attack on the Rafah area, which resulted in the killing of Emad Abu Harb, aged 32, Rajaa' Mahmoud Al-Sebakhi, aged 19, Mohammed Taqesh, aged 19, and Hisham Abu Harb, aged 21.

The Palestinian leadership reiterates its strongest condemnation of this escalation of Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, which has included the deliberate killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians, in grave breach of international humanitarian law, as well as the deliberate destruction of civilian property and infrastructure. We reiterate the demand for an immediate halt to all military operations by Israel, the occupying Power, against the defenseless Palestinian civilian population and for its respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention throughout the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Such Israeli acts of terror and violence — whether in the Gaza Strip or in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and including the ongoing violent rampages of the Israeli settlers — are clearly intended to sow more fear, trauma and suffering among the Palestinian civilian population, to provoke a new cycle of bloodshed and to further destabilize the already fragile situation, and must not be tolerated. The international community, and particularly the Security Council, must demand that Israel immediately cease its military aggression and abide by all of its obligations under international law. Such a firm and clear stand is urgent for averting the loss of more innocent lives and for averting the descent into yet another deadly and destructive cycle of violence between the two sides, with the attendant negative ramifications for the region and beyond, that will take us even further from the prospects of a just and peaceful settlement to this prolonged and tragic conflict.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 402 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 August 2011 (A/ES-10/530-S/2011/529), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations